



360 Notre Dame St. Box 89 Belle River ON N0R 1A0
Phone (519) 728-3366 Fax (519) 728-2646
info@activelivingchiro.ca www.activelivingchiro.ca

Beat the Stress Part II **By: Dr. Stephen O'Neil**

This article is follow-up to Beat the Stress from a couple weeks ago. Stress is all around us and infiltrates every aspect of our lives. The three main forms of stress are physical stress, chemical stress, and mental/emotional stress. Any one of these stressors or any combination of these stressors cause negative responses in our body's function. These responses are directly related to how our body copes with the demands of our everyday environment.

As I said in part one of Beat the Stress, the central nervous system controls and directs all other functions of the body. For optimal health the central nervous system must be functioning without interference. The brain must be able to freely communicate with the rest of the body. Subluxations, which are restrictions or misalignments in the spine, interrupt the transmission of nerve impulses in the spinal cord and spinal nerves. This in turn prevents us from being as healthy as we can be. It also reduces our ability to cope with the many stressors in our lives. Chiropractors restore proper alignment and range of motion to the joints in our spines which relieve pressure on the nervous system. In doing so, our ability to deal with stress is improved.

We all have a stress threshold or a level of stress which we can deal with and still maintain health. It is when stresses pile up and we don't properly deal with them that parts break down or begin to malfunction. Having a properly functioning nervous system greatly increases our stress threshold.

Many other things can be done to maximize our ability to adapt and cope with stress. Mental/Emotional stress is dealt with very differently from one person to the next. Counseling, exercise, yoga, and other relaxation techniques are all very effective in beating the mental/emotional side of life. This is a stress that is mostly unseen but very difficult to cope with and can present as very noticeable symptoms.

Chemical stressors can be dealt with by avoiding drugs and alcohol. Quitting smoking and balancing out diet will help minimize the chemical stress in our lives. Scheduled fasts and herbal cleanses can help rejuvenate our systems and clear any accumulated toxins. Some chemical stressors are unavoidable because there is virtually no place on earth that is untouched by man made pollution. We can greatly reduce the negative effects of chemical stress by not adding more pollutants to our already taxed systems.

The most noticeable stress is physical stress. It is the most noticeable because it generally causes pain. In many occupations, physical stress is unavoidable. It may come in the form of heavy lifting, awkward lifting or working in demanding positions. It may also come in the form of repetitive work such as factory production work. Computer work is also a very common repetitively demanding occupation. When these demands can not be avoided, an attempt to minimize the effects should be made. Ergonomically correct work stations are very important in reducing stress on joints and preventing fatigue in soft tissues. Proper bending, twisting, and lifting habits should also be observed. Multiple breaks should be taken throughout the day to move and stretch muscles which may be becoming fatigued. A focus should be placed on strengthening the body parts most involved in the stressful behavior. Strengthening these areas will make them much better able to deal with the stress and less likely to break down or become injured during use. If all else fails a change in employment may be necessary to avoid stress and maintain one's health.

Seeing your Chiropractor on a regular basis for spinal check-ups and realignments helps our nervous system function optimally. Optimal function allows us the best chance to beat the stress in our lives and cope with the many stressors we cannot avoid.